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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RIGA 000309

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PARM](#) [RS](#) [YI](#) [AF](#) [LG](#)
SUBJECT: LATVIAN POL DIR ON MD, CFE, AFGHANISTAN AND KOSOVO

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Classified By: Charge Tamir G. Waser. Reason: 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C/NF) Summary: In a May 2 meeting with Charge, Latvian MFA political director Ilgvars Klava wanted to ensure that his comments at the recent NATO ministerial were clear - Latvia supports our efforts at building a missile defense system, but believes that European nations should be ashamed at their inability to move forward on a NATO system. Regarding Putin's comments on CFE, Klava said that Latvia strongly supported retaining the Istanbul commitments as a prerequisite for ratification of the A/CFE and looks forward to joining the treaty at that time. Klava was pleased with the strong Allied reaction to Lavrov at the NRC in Oslo. Klava detailed Latvia's plans to send two police officers to Afghanistan as part of the ESDP mission there and a civilian advisor to the PRT in Maymana. The GOL hopes to increase its civilian deployment and assistance contribution to Afghanistan in 2008. Turning to Kosovo, Klava said that failure to adopt a new UNSCR would make it very difficult, if not impossible, to deploy the planned ESDP mission there, but would not effect Latvia's legal basis for participation in KFOR. He also offered personal thoughts on the Latvian reaction to a unilateral declaration of independence in Kosovo. End summary.

Missile Defense

12. (C) Klava opened with missile defense, saying he feared that his comments at the NATO ministerial in Oslo (where he attended in place of FM Pabriks) were misinterpreted. He said he wanted to make the point that Latvia supports the idea of missile defense and recognizes its importance to Europe. Since it benefits Europe's collective security, he was urging that NATO should be more active on this issue and not simply wait around while the US does all the work. Klava was afraid this was interpreted as criticism of US plans, but on the contrary, he thinks that Europe should be embarrassed at the inability to address this threat to our common security through NATO, noting that it had been under discussion for over 5 years, and that the US was doing the right thing to move forward with willing partners. He also praised our continued efforts to share our thinking on MD with Russia, even if Moscow often chooses to pretend not to hear.

CFE

13. (C) After receiving ref A points on CFE, Klava said that Latvia strongly supported our position that Russia must fulfill the Istanbul Commitments before ratification of the Adapted CFE treaty. While Latvia wants to join the CFE regime, it would not throw Moldova and Georgia overboard to get the new treaty. Klava said he thought the discussion in Oslo at the NRC on this issue was good and Lavrov seemed uncomfortable with the coordinated assault on the Russian

position. FM Pabriks gave an interview terming the Russian move "a power play" and underscoring the need to fulfill the Istanbul Commitments. As a State not party to the treaty, Latvia would not engage in debates on fulfillment of the current treaty but will instead stay focused on getting to the point that A/CFE can be ratified and Latvia could then accede.

14. (C/NF) Asked about the effect on Latvia if Russia abandons the CFE, Klava said not much was expected in the short term. Latvian military officials briefed him that Russia lacked equipment that could easily be moved to mount a major buildup near the border with the Baltic States.

Afghanistan

15. (C) In line with its planned increase in the military contribution to ISAF, Latvia is moving ahead with plans to enhance its civilian contributions in Afghanistan (ref B), Klava said, and the cabinet has now given its approval. For the second half of 2007, Latvia plans to send two police officers to the ESDP mission there when it is started. Latvia will also send a civilian (MFA employee) to work with the Norwegian PRT in Maymana to both coordinate development assistance projects and serve as a political advisor. In 2008, Latvia plans to budget for four police officer and for two civilian jobs (splitting the assistance coordinator and political advisor slots) and for increased development assistance.

Kosovo

16. (C) Latvia continues to watch developments in Kosovo. Klava said that failure to adopt a new UNSCR to implement the

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Ahtisaari plan would not be a victory for either Russia or Serbia, but would, in fact, be a disaster that could destabilize the region. It was hard to imagine the planned ESDP mission going ahead without a new UNSCR, he said, and French reps had been especially clear about that in recent EU meetings. Asked what failure to get a new UNSCR would mean for Latvian participation in KFOR, Klava responded "nothing."

He explained that Latvian law allows for troops to be deployed to missions a) where there is a UNSCR, or b) where NATO is undertaking the mission, or c) when a NATO member is leading a mission and directly requests Latvian participation. That said, he felt that failure of a new UNSCR would "create real challenges in NATO," citing Greece as likely to be especially difficult.

17. (C/NF) Asked to speculate on Latvian reaction to failure of a new UNSCR and a unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo, Klava (strictly protect) said that recent NATO and EU meetings led him to believe that the GOL needed to do some thinking on this. His best guess, stressing that this was only his own thinking, was that Latvia might be persuaded to recognize an independent Kosovo, but only if larger EU states took the lead (he cited specifically the UK) and, most likely, only if the three Baltics agreed to do so together. "We won't be first or second in the EU on this one," he said.

He also speculated that pressure from the U.S. and key EU members would be needed to move Latvia in this situation, as the decision would have to be weighed against Russian pressure not to do so.

WASER